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SUBJECT: Dyncorp CP Incident Highlights Need for Additional PSD Oversight

REF: Baghdad 1720

1. (SBU) Summary: On September 28, Iraqi soldiers manning an international zone (IZ) checkpoint beat four U.S. citizen members of a Dyncorp International (DI) personal security detail (PSD) convoy. The DI PSD had violated at least two Embassy checkpoint policies, as well as Iraqi instructions. Nevertheless, Iraqi reaction was a grossly disproportionate and punitive use of force. The Embassy remained abreast of the situation, contributed information to the DOD-led (successful) effort to free the DI personnel, verified the citizenship of the victims, and submitted a diplomatic note of protest to the MFA. INL subsequently instructed DI to remove the four PSD members from Iraq, which has occurred, and underscored that DI personnel must comply with all Iraqi laws and regulations, particularly at checkpoints. DI meantime has implemented a top-down review of Embassy checkpoint policy with all of its PSD members. Nevertheless, the incident underscores the utility of having Arabic speakers join U.S. PSD convoys. End Summary.

2. (SBU) According to DI accounts, on September 28 at 1712 hours Iraqi soldiers stopped and searched a DI convoy at IZ Entry Control Point Number Four (ECP-4). After reportedly soliciting smoke grenades from the occupants of each vehicle, Iraqi guards permitted two of the three cars in the motorcade to depart CP-4. The assistant PSD leader who was in the third car tried to obtain the name of the senior Iraqi official at the CP.

3. (SBU) The violent Iraqi reaction apparently was sparked when the assistant PSD leader photographed the senior Iraqi military official on scene after the Iraqi declined to provide his name. Per DI's initial report, Iraqi soldiers pulled the four PSD members from their vehicle, stripped them of their weapons and equipment, and physically assaulted them at gun point. The beatings reportedly continued after the Iraqis transferred the DI PSD members to Brigade Headquarters. One DI employee said that he had been struck in the abdomen and lower back repeatedly with a 45-pound barbell while in custody at the Brigade Headquarters. Another reported that he sustained numerous blows to the head by an AK-47 butt stock.

4. (SBU) A U.S. Army officer was able to secure the release of the DI PSD members and most of their confiscated equipment (not including one Beretta pistol) that evening. The four DI employees received medical treatment that night at Sather AFB's Combat Support Hospital. Three of the four were discharged, but the fourth was held overnight with a reported concussion and possible cervical or spinal injuries.

¶5. (SBU) Immediately after DI informed the Embassy of the incident, the consular officers verified the PSD team members' U.S. citizenship and began preparations to request a consular visit. (NOTE: The Iraqis released the PSD team before the consular officer engaged the MFA. END NOTE) RSO investigators interviewed the PSD members and spoke to other DI personnel. The Embassy subsequently submitted a diplomatic note of protest requesting that Iraqi officials investigate the physical mistreatment of the four American citizens, take appropriate measures to ensure that other instances of mistreatment of Americans or USG employees do not occur in Iraq, inform all military and law enforcement agencies of their obligations under Iraqi law, and urge the Government of Iraq to investigate the matter and bring offenders to justice. The acting DCM reiterated this message in a meeting with FM Zebari. RSO and their local military counterparts are drafting a directive establishing clear guidelines for PSDs operating in Iraq that will be distributed to all parties.

¶6. (SBU) On September 29, INL Baghdad instructed DI to remove the four PSD members from Iraq immediately, and to implement a top-down review of Embassy checkpoint policy with the DI PSD members who remain in Iraq. Both INL and RSO stressed that DI personnel must obey all local laws and regulations. The RSO and MNF-I, meanwhile, are developing a plan to communicate checkpoint policy to all USG contractors. All four PSD members involved in the incident departed from Iraq to Washington, D.C. on October 2. Per INL's instruction to DI, these individuals will not return to service in Iraq.

Comment

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¶7. (SBU) The DI PSD violated at least two Mission policies on

BAGHDAD 00002804 002 OF 002

checkpoint conduct, and these actions probably provoked or elevated the violent response by the Iraqi guards. Nevertheless, the Iraqi guards' reaction was a grossly disproportionate and punitive use of force at the checkpoint and subsequently at the Brigade Headquarters.

¶8. (SBU) This incident underscores the utility of having Arabic speakers in each PSD. The recently completed INL in-county PSD training program could be used to vet, train and employ Iraqi Arabic speaking local nationals within PSD convoys. DI is exploring this option, as the September 28 incident might not have occurred if the DI PSD had included an Arabic speaker schooled in the most effective ways to communicate directly with Iraqis.

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